

Foreword

Won't the World Also Become Peaceful in this Way?

by the Reverend Koji Obayashi
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"Can you divide a taiyaki precisely in two?"
(Taiyaki is a fish shaped cake with sweet red bean inside.)

This is a line I heard when I was watching the fifth episode of a TV drama, "Hey there, Handsome Guy!! Season 2." When I heard it, I was moved despite myself.

Israel is still attacking the Gaza Area of Palestine. Due to this ongoing tragedy, I recently read a book by Amos Oz, an Israeli author and journalist, that was published after the 9.11 Terrorism of 2001 A.D. (The book is called "No Flowers Bloom in a Place Where We Maintain that We Are Right.") Because I read this book, this very scene/line of the drama had a strong impact on me.

From here, I'd like to talk about this book of Mr. (Amos) Oz for a while. Many people tend to interpret that the conflict between Palestine

and Israel is a "confrontation between (different) religions" and/or a "collision of civilizations." But Mr. Oz asserts that they are wrong. According to him, it is anything but a "war of religions." The author explains, "This is a conflict between people who believe they can employ ANY methods in order to achieve their purposes, no matter what the purposes are, and people like us, who consider being alive and living day to day the most important and (who) never think of using our lives as a means (to achieve our purposes)."

Why do the Palestinians and the Israelis fight against each other? Well, in order to understand the reason for this, we need to learn the sad history these two ethnic groups have gone through respectively. The Jews were severely persecuted in many European countries for centuries. Likewise, the Palestinians suffered from humiliating treatments by other Arab clans when they lived in some Arab countries. The Palestinians faced persecutions as well. For those Palestinian people, the land of Palestine was the one-and-only place they could ever call "home."

Mr. Oz exclaims: This is "neither a war of religions, conflict of cultures nor discord

between two different traditions. This is a conflict of two ethnic groups over the ownership of the land of Palestine. The bottom line for them is 'Who owns this home?' This is nothing but a conflict over a real estate, so to speak. I, therefore, believe that this is a conflict that can be solved."

Because I had known these words of Amos Oz, the scene of "dividing a taiyaki in two pieces" of the aforementioned TV drama appealed to my heart so vividly.

From here, I share the story of the fifth episode of the drama with you. Three sisters, Yuka, Rika and Mika are having a conversation. The second eldest/youngest sister, Rika, is thinking about a strangely memorable experience that she had with a gentleman whom she works with in the same building. The gentleman is called Mr. Hara and he is the very one, with whom Rika tried to "divide a taiyaki into two pieces."

Usually, one would cut a taiyaki in two horizontally, but much of the sweet red bean is in its head area, and this might cause an unfair situation. Yuka, the eldest sister, said, "Yes, that may cause an unfair situation, but

that doesn't mean we should cut the taiyaki in two vertically. I don't really like to see a cut-open taiyaki, either." Rika, the middle sibling, agrees and adds, "I firmly believe that it is absolutely impossible to divide a taiyaki in two perfectly." Then Mika, the youngest one, counters her elder sisters, "Well, but dividing one thing in two and sharing it with someone else is good, because this is something one can never do by him/herself, you know." The other two heard their youngest sister say so and agreed with her.

After the conversation, Rika remembers dividing the taiyaki in two with Mr. Hara. Mr. Hara and Rika played rock-paper-scissors. Mr. Hara won and he divided the fish-shaped cake in two and said to Rika, "All right. Take the piece that you want to eat."



The gentleman quickly sensed that Rika was being surprised to hear that, and he said, "Well, it is absolutely impossible for anyone to divide a thing in two perfectly, isn't it?" (Rika nods her head 'Yes.')

"Because of this, it is a good idea to ask Person A to divide the thing in two and ask Person B to choose the very piece he/she wants to take.

To be more concrete, just as we have just done, the one who won the rock-paper-scissors divides and the one who lost it chooses. Or we can do the opposite. I suggest this method because the one who divides tries his/her best to divide it as precisely and fairly as possible and the one who chooses gets to choose what he/she truly wants. This is the best method to make and keep both persons happy, right?

I wonder if the world will also become peaceful in this way. "

Very lastly, Rika says in a little voice, "Technically, one piece was NOT just as big as

the other, but we were both perfectly sure that we SHARED the taiyaki."

Mr. Amos Oz refers to the "painful question, 'Who owns this land?'" Applying the taiyaki-sharing story in searching for the answer to this serious question is perhaps to take this grave subject too simply. But I believe that this is far more important than a "solution" that may aggravate the confrontation between the Israelis and the Palestinians.

As a Konkokyo minister, I remember a teaching of our Founder, Konko Daijin. The following teaching, I believe, will surely help "the world become peaceful in this way." Ms. Hide Onishi introduces this teaching to all of us:

"Receiving nice things, no matter what they are, makes people happy. Give, and you will receive virtue.

When giving, do not keep the nicer item for yourself. Even when giving an apron, keep the lesser one and give the better one."

Annual Convention for All Konkokyo Ministers and Members Held Through Doing Goyo for Konkokyo



On June 8, 2025, the Konkokyo Headquarters held the Commemorative Ceremony for the Independence of the Konko Faith at the Grand Ceremony Hall, which was followed by the Annual Convention for All Konkokyo Ministers and Members with (the 6th) Konko-sama in presence.

This year, Mr. Morichika Nasu, a member of Konko Church of Ogimachi, Osaka, Japan, made a presentation. After the presentation, the Reverend Kazumasa Tsukamoto, Director of the Outreach Department, made a commentary on Mr. Nasu's speech. Lastly, all worshippers in the Hall sang "Shinjin No Eiko."

The following is Mr. Nasu's presentation.

Presentation by Mr. Morichika Nasu

◆ Opportunity to Improve myself



The other day, the Konkokyo Headquarters gave me a phone call. They asked me to "talk about my experiences of handing down my faith to my children at home by doing goyo/selfless service for Konkokyo." They also encouraged me to refer to the blessings I have received from our Parent Kami.

I was surprised at this offer from Headquarters, but the Head Minister of the Ogimachi church gently spoke to me, "Isn't this a good opportunity for you to look back on your life. You can remember your life stories... you have been practice faith in the Konko Faith since you were born." The words of the Head Minister gave me a positive shock. I knew he was right. For 51 years since my birth, I have had my faith in Kami nurtured at Konko Church of Ogimachi. Not only the present Head Minister but also the former Head Minister taught me a lot. When I looked back on my life, I got to remember various things. And I was made to realize that I should thank this precious opportunity that allows me to improve the way I am and develop my faith in our Parent Kami even more deeply from now.

Today, I would like to talk about how I have been raised spiritually and (how) I have received divine blessings from Kami. I also would like to refer to how I have been working on handing my faith down to my children.

◆ The Discussions I Got to Hear at Services in our Home

Both my father and mother were born into Konko member's family. On my paternal line, I am a fourth generation member of the Konko Faith. And on my maternal line, I am a third generation member. Both of my parents became connected with Konko Church of Ogimachi, and I therefore have visited this church ever since I was born. The late Rev. Hirota Oshiki, the former Head Minister of the church, was older than my father by only one year, and Hirota sensei was just like a "second father" to me. I was in fact taken good care of by him.

The late Rev. Hirota Oshiki tried various things. He did so many things that I can't even remember all of them. One of the things Hirota sensei worked on hard is "takusai." I'm



going to talk about takusai from now.

Takusai is a Konkokyo service at a member's house. For most Konkokyo members, it is not unusual for them to have their minister visit their home for their ancestor's memorial

service. In the case of my family, we ask our minister to come over to our home a lot more often; we have had a monthly service in our home, inviting our minister, even before my birth.



At the occasion of (each) takusai, we invite not only our minister but also a few of our close faith friends to our home. After the service, we have dinner together as "naorai" or "norai." (These are nothing but a slight pronunciation difference. They both mean a meal worshippers partake after a religious service. The meal is prepared usually with the things they offered to the altar for the service.) At the dinner table, our minister, my parents and their faith friends discuss various topics regarding their faith in Kami. Since I always joined them for the dinner, I usually heard them talk with each other as a little kid. I can't recall exactly what they were talking about, but I do remember that my parents referred to this; When I was born, my parents had a hard time in making both ends meet as a young married couple. They went through a lot of financial struggles but were able to receive divine blessings by having and

practicing faith in Kami. On another evening, they discussed their vision for the future of the Ogimachi church... how the church would be in five and ten years from then. The content of these discussions at our dinner table was probably much different from that of sermons given at our church after monthly services, for instance.

Ever since my little childhood, I have been blessed with opportunities to hear various stories from our minister and my parents. Through hearing them, I am certain that I have been taught a lot of important things. Since I married my wife and had my own family, I have had a monthly service in my home. My parents still have a monthly service in their home. I go to their home with my family when they have one, and my parents are very happy to see their children (meaning my wife and myself) and grandchildren.



◆ Dinner with All Family Members



Next, I would like to talk about how I have been trying to hand down my faith in Kami to my children at home. I got married 26 years ago and my wife and I are blessed with 3

children. Needless to say, we were both tremendously happy when we had children. At the same time, we felt enormous responsibility for each of them; we knew we would need to bring up each of our children responsibly until they all became 20 years old.

As their parent, I see to it that I share my experiences with my children. I also want each of my kids to have a lot of experiences in their lives. In order to achieve these goals, I believed I should reduce my psychological distance between myself and my children so that we could talk to each other about anything.

There is one thing we have constantly practiced/carried out since each of our children was born up until the point where they all became adults: All family members gather for dinner and all of us eat dinner together. During that time we keep TV turned off and we cherish our dinner time. Both my

wife and I had a job, but we were lucky enough to spend our dinner time together, and our kids were also with us every evening. At the dinner table, I have talked to my children about various things and I have also listened to each of them.

Naturally, topics I share with each of my kids are diverse, and I consider how old each of the children is when I choose a subject. I ask them, for example, how their school life is, if they get along with their friends and which directions they want to pursue for their future. I discuss this kind of general topics with my children. My eldest daughter was fond of reading growing up, and I had her talk to me about the content of the books she'd read. And I also talk to them about the Konko Faith (Konkokyo) and the Konko church I regularly visit.



I have asked my children, for instance, "Do you know who Ikigami Konko Daijin is?" Have you ever asked YOUR child/children who Ikigami Konko Daijin is?

You may say, "You ought to know the answer, of course you should!" In the case of my family, by the way, my aforementioned question started it all; I got to speak to my kids about the Founder of the Konko Faith.



Every summer, our family takes part in the Konko Nationwide Gathering for Boys and Girls that takes place in the Sacred Grounds of Konkokyo. In the past, I explained the background of this big summer event to my kids, "The Third Konko-sama sat at the Mediation Seat for his goyo as a little boy. At that time, Konko-sama would often cry in his effort to endure his hardship. Boys and girls all over Japan wanted to come over to the Konkokyo Headquarters and convey their

sincere gratitude to Konko-sama. This is how the Konko Nationwide Gathering for Boys and Girls began."

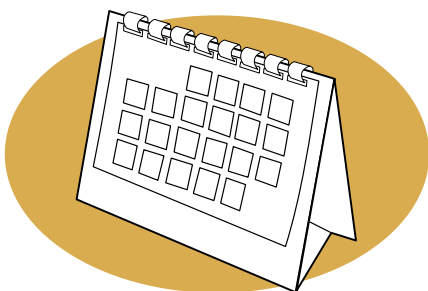
In this way, we discussed many kinds of subjects at our dinner table including some topics of Konkokyo.

When you take your child/children to monthly services at your church and/or to Konkokyo events, it is important, I believe, that you explain the meaning of Konkokyo services and the background of those events to them.

The reason why I do these things to my children is probably because the former Head Minister of Ogimachi would talk to children including myself about this kind of topics, as well as those stories I used to hear as a boy when he was in our home for our family's monthly service.

◆ Adjustment of Schedules

Next, one more thing I consider important regarding my conversations with my children at our dinner table is the adjustment of my schedule with those of my children.



Generally speaking, children come to make plans on their own when they become teenagers. Without seeking their parents' approval, they often set

appointments with their friends. Their appointments with their friends sometimes happen to be exactly on the same day for some events/activities at our Konko church. I am sure that many of you have gone through similar troubles with your child/children before.

As a parent, I want my children to pay more respect to church events. In reality, however, children usually place more importance on their own plans. Because of this, it is important for us to ask our child/children, "There's a church event/activity on this day, and we are supposed to do some goyo in our church on this day. Can you please make yourself available for these dates? Thanks !"

In our home, we usually do this kind of schedule adjustments during our dinner time, and I have often emphasized that as far as our family is concerned, church events take priority over personal plans.

A large part of the reason why I was able to discuss topics of our faith in Kami is because my wife has been quite cooperative with me. Both of her parents have deep, sincere



faith in Kami, and my wife grew up in a richly religious home. Just like myself, my wife also wants to prioritize goyo at our Konko church over anything else, and she had agreed with me before I started to talk to our children about Konkokyo at our dinner table. I am grateful that both my wife and I were on the same page. I can say with confidence through my own experience that it is important for a husband and a wife to spend a lot of time talking with one another and reach a mutual consensus in advance.

◆ Goyo of Playing Musical Instruments for a Konkokyo Service

Next, I'd like to talk about playing musical instruments for a Konkokyo service.



My father did this goyo for many years since he was still young. At our Ogimachi church, sho (Shinto flute or a traditional Japanese wind instrument resembling panpipes), Hichiriki (small double-reed wind instrument used in gagaku/Shinto music), ryuteki (dragon flute, medium-pitched bark-covered bamboo transverse flute with seven holes, used in gagaku) and koto (Japanese harp), all of these musical instruments have been played by our fellow lay believers. And I grew up listening to their play.

When I entered middle school (junior high school), my father encouraged me to join our church's group of tengaku (music for Konkokyo services). Since I was quite familiar with tengaku and had interest in it, I joined the group.

In the Konko Faith Headquarters and each

local Konkokyo church, there are various goyos we are supposed to do, and the goyo of music for Konkokyo services, to me, seems to have a unique characteristic quality-wise. And due to its very unique characteristic, I believe handing down one's faith to next generations will be a bit easier if or when you go through tengaku.

As explained above, doing goyo of tengaku means that you play a musical instrument during a Konkokyo service. Your musical performance is obviously a part of the service, and you are responsible for its quality accordingly.

I have performed musically during each of the services at our church and I have also played for funeral services of our church members many times. This is a big responsibility, and regular practice becomes important. And because of its importance, you will naturally get involved with your church on a deep level. In many cases, your children tend to get estranged from their (Konko) church when they become teenagers. But if your kids are members of tengaku, such a disappointing situation will be less likely.



◆ Goyo Done by a Parent and his/her Child

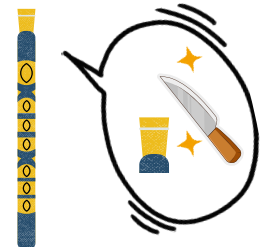
One more merit you can enjoy by doing the goyo of tengaku with your child is that you have a common topic you can discuss with him/her.

There are many parents and their children who do the goyo of tengaku in the

Tengakukai Group (gagaku music group for Konkokyo services).

The other day, I happened to see a father and his son, both of whom play the hichiriki for Konkokyo services. You can generate sounds from a hichiriki by putting a reed (called "shita" or "tongue") into it. You are supposed to make delicate, subtle adjustments onto your reed so that it fits you perfectly. Here, making adjustments often means to sharpen your reed. But this is a typical case of "easier said than done." It's in fact never easy. The father sharpened his son's reed and handed it to him, asking his son, "How about this time?" Then the son looked happy and replied, "Yeah, this is really good this time, dad." This scene made me smile. I thought that the father and his son got along with one another very well.

In the case of my family, I play the ryuteki,





If you wish to play a musical instrument for a service at the Konkokyo Headquarters, you need to pass a certification exam of "orchestra" members for Konkokyo services. Both my son and daughter passed this exam after I did so, and the three generations of us, namely my father, myself and my children have been playing musical instruments for the services at the Headquarters. I am truly happy and grateful about this.

◆ **Feelings and Wishes that I Want to Tell (my Children)**

So far, I am telling you about some daily, common scenes of my family. When you deal with your children as their parent, you do not always get to have joyful, pleasant conversations with them. As your kids grow up, you sometimes need to give them severe words. Sometimes you even have some quarrels with them.

When I look back at the past of my family, yes, I have had some difficult



my daughter plays the sho and my son plays the hichiriki. We all play different musical instruments. When we practice together in our home, I ask my son, for instance, "Why don't you try to play your instrument this way?" Then my son answers, "You make it sound SOOOO EASY, but it's not so easy as you think it is." We often have this kind of dialogues. We do not play the same instrument, yet we can enjoy talking with each other.

In this way, when you play a musical instrument for Konkokyo services with your child(ren), you can naturally have lively conversations with each other and you succeed in building a close, intimate relationship with your children. I find it wonderful that a parent and his/her child(ren) get to do a common goyo together.



hours regarding my children. Whenever I faced some challenges, our former and present Head Ministers (of the Ogimachi church) and my parents prayed to our Parent Kami

for my family. And we were able to receive blessings from Kami each time. I am deeply thankful for it.

These days, many children have smart phones. As a result, there are almost no conversations even if all family members are sharing the same dining table for dinner, and this is happening in a lot of homes, I hear. Maybe we can no longer take it for granted that we enjoy our meals, sharing one table and having lively, pleasant conversations together.

Each family has their own problems and challenges. Therefore, it is never easy to tell what is right and what is wrong. I, however, will be tremendously grateful if what you have just heard from me helps you a lot from now on.

This is all for my speech today. Thank you very much.

